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POTOMAC WATCH | Updated October 26, 2012, 5:46 p.m. ET

Strassel: A Chronic Case of Obamnesia

The president has left a long trail of flip-flops.

By KIMBERLEY A. STRASSEL

With 10 days until the election, Barack Obama's latest strategy is to claim that his opponent has developed "stage 3 Romnesia." Mitt Romney, the argument goes, is conveniently forgetting his real agenda, flipping his positions to better appeal to the electorate. Since Mr. Romney's conservative base would surely disagree, this raises the question of whether the president isn't himself suffering from a psychological malady that experts call "projection."

"I happen to be a proponent of a single-payer universal health care program"—Illinois state Sen. Barack Obama, June 2003.

"I have not said that I was a single-payer supporter"—President Obama, August 2009.

"Leadership means that the buck stops here. . . . I therefore intend to oppose the effort to increase America's debt limit"—Sen. Barack Obama, March 2006.

Related Video



Columnist Kim Strassel on President Obama's flip-

"It is not acceptable for us not to raise the debt ceiling and to allow the U.S. government to default"—President Obama, July 2011.

"I favor legalizing same-sex marriages, and would fight efforts to prohibit such marriages"—Obama questionnaire response, 1996, while running for Illinois state Senate.

"I believe marriage is between a man and a woman. I

flops. Photo: Associated Press

am not in favor of gay marriage"—Sen. Obama, November 2008, while running for president.

"It is important for me to go ahead and affirm that I think same-sex couples should be able to get married"—President Obama, May 2012.

"We have an idea for the trigger. . . . Sequestration"—Obama Office of Management and Budget Director Jack Lew in 2011, as reported in Bob Woodward's "The Price of Politics."

"First of all, the sequester is not something that I've proposed. It is something that Congress has proposed"—President Obama, October 2012.

"If I am the Democratic nominee, I will aggressively pursue an agreement with the Republican nominee to preserve a publicly financed general election"—Sen. Obama, 2007.

"We've made the decision not to participate in the public financing system for the general election"—Sen. Obama, June 2008.

"I will never question the patriotism of others in this campaign"—Sen. Obama, June 2008.

"The way Bush has done it over the last eight years is . . . [he] added \$4 trillion by his lonesome, so that we now have over \$9 trillion of debt that we are going to have to pay back. . . . That's irresponsible. It's unpatriotic"—Sen. Obama, July 2008.

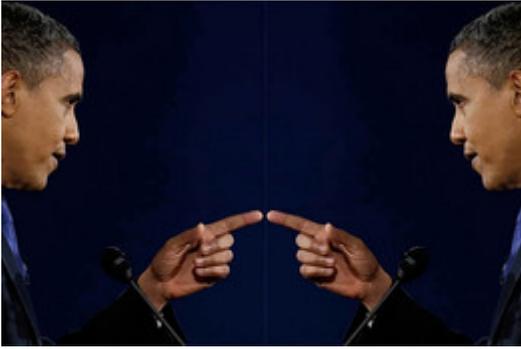
"I don't remember what the number was precisely. . . . We don't have to worry about it short term"—President Obama, September 2012, on the debt figure when he took office (\$10 trillion) and whether to worry about today's \$16 trillion figure.

"[Sen. Hillary Clinton believes] that . . . if the government does not force taxpayers to buy health care, that we will penalize them in some fashion. I disagree with that"—Sen. Obama, Jan 2008, opposing the individual mandate for health insurance.

"I'm open to a system where every American bears responsibility for owning health insurance"—President Obama, June 2009, supporting the individual mandate.

"Instead of celebrating your dynamic union and seeking to partner with you to meet common challenges, there have been times when America has shown arrogance and been dismissive, even derisive"—President Obama, April 2009, in France.

"We have at times been disengaged, and at times we sought to dictate our terms"—President Obama, April 2009, in Trinidad and Tobago.



Associated Press

"Nothing Governor Romney just said is true, starting with this notion of me apologizing"—Barack Obama, October 2012, on whether he went on a global apology tour.

"The problem with a spending freeze is you're using a hatchet where you need a scalpel"—Sen. Obama, September 2008.

"Starting in 2011, we are prepared to freeze government spending for three years"—President Obama, January 2010.

"So if somebody wants to build a coal-fired plant, they can, it's just that it will bankrupt them"—Sen. Obama, January 2008, on his plans to financially penalize coal plants.

"Now is the time to end this addiction, and to understand that drilling is a stop-gap measure, not a long-term solution"—Sen. Obama, August 2008.

"Here's what I've done since I've been president. We have increased oil production to the highest levels in 16 years. Natural gas production is the highest it's been in decades. We have seen increases in coal production and coal employment"—President Obama, October 2012.

"If I don't have this done in three years, then there's going to be a one-term proposition"—President Obama, 2009.

"We've got a long way to go but . . . we've come too far to turn back now. . . . And that's why I'm running for a second term"—President Obama, October 2012.

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A version of this article appeared October 26, 2012, on page A11 in the U.S. edition of The Wall Street Journal, with the headline: A Chronic Case of Obamnesia.

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